

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

Game Branch / HPC Project Number: 13-611

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Survey and Capture of Bighorn Sheep in the Mescal Mountains within Unit 24A for DNA and movement corridor research

Region and Game Management Unit: Region 6 / GMU 24A

Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC):

- Payson Natural Resource Committee

Was the project presented to the LHPC?

YES[x] **NO**[]

Has this project been submitted in previous years? **YES**[] **NO**[x]

If Yes, was it funded? **YES**[] **NO**[] → **Funded HPC Project #(s):**

Project Type: Capture and Collaring of Bighorn Sheep

Brief Project Summary:

Since 2008, reported sightings of bighorn sheep along state route highway 77 have been documented. In 2009, AGFD personnel observed 5 bighorn sheep from the ground in the area of El Capitan Canyon. It's unknown where these bighorn sheep travel to or from or even which species of bighorn is present. This project proposal, if funded, will survey the area to determine the number of sheep, capture and collar up to 5 sheep with GPS collars.

Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit: bighorn sheep

Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year):

Project Start Date: 11/01/2014

Project End Date: 05/01/2017

Environmental Compliance:

NEPA Completed: **Yes**[] **No**[X] **N/A**[]

Projected Completion Date: December 2014

State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance:

Yes[] **No**[X] **N/A**[]

Projected Completion Date: _____

Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: **N/A**[]

To be Completed by: Dustin Darveau, AZGFD

Projected Completion Date: December 2014

PROJECT FUNDING

Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested: \$ 41,500.00

Cost Share or Matching Funds: TBD

Total Project Costs: \$ 41,500.00

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Applicant (please print):

Danny Rodriguez

Address:

7200 E University
Mesa, AZ 85207

E-mail:

jrodriguez@azgfd.gob

Telephone: 928-525-4380

Date: 08/31/13

AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel):
Danny Rodriguez 928-525-4380, Dustin Darveau 480-324-3555

Project has been coordinated with:
BLM, ADBSS

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

The primary purpose of this project is to survey the Mescal Mountain area within Game Management Unit 24A to determine how many sheep are in the area. Once observed, the next goal would be to determine whether these sheep are desert or Rocky Mountain bighorns. To accomplish this, an aerial capture must be conducted to capture and collar 3-5 bighorn sheep to monitor travel patterns. DNA will be collected to determine species and genetic history. Once collared, movement patterns and locations would be monitored within Unit 24A. The data collected from the local areas would be utilized for bighorn sheep management &/or releases in the future.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this project is to determine the number of bighorn sheep in the area, monitor movements, and determine which species of bighorn sheep is present.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

Most of the bighorn sheep in GMU 24A are Rocky Mountain's and have been traditionally observed along the Salt River Canyon in the northern part of the unit. These observed sheep herds have been collectively grouped by Region VI to be a combined Unit 23 South/24A herd due to the constant movements north and south of the river.

Surveys for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in GMU 23 South/24A have been ongoing since 2005 with the most recent survey in 2011. During the survey flights, sheep were observed on the 24A side and have been observed along the Salt River Mountains. Since 2008, reported sightings from the local residents of Drippings Springs, Globe, and other surrounding areas have observed up to 12 bighorn sheep along State Route 77 North of Dripping Springs. The most recent sighting was a single ram near Steamboat Mountain North east of Kearny.

It is undetermined where these bighorn sheep have originated from, but speculations that these bighorns could have dispersed from Aravaipa Mountains, Mineral Mountains, or even West Clear Creek.

The proposed action is to survey, capture and collar up to 5 bighorn sheep in the proposed areas. Their locations and movement patterns will help determine future management objectives for unit 24A. The information obtained through this survey/monitoring project will also help determine travel patterns used by these sheep. Each sheep captured will also have DNA collected for genetic analysis, nasal swabs for disease testing, and the recommended health screening set forth by the department veterinarian.

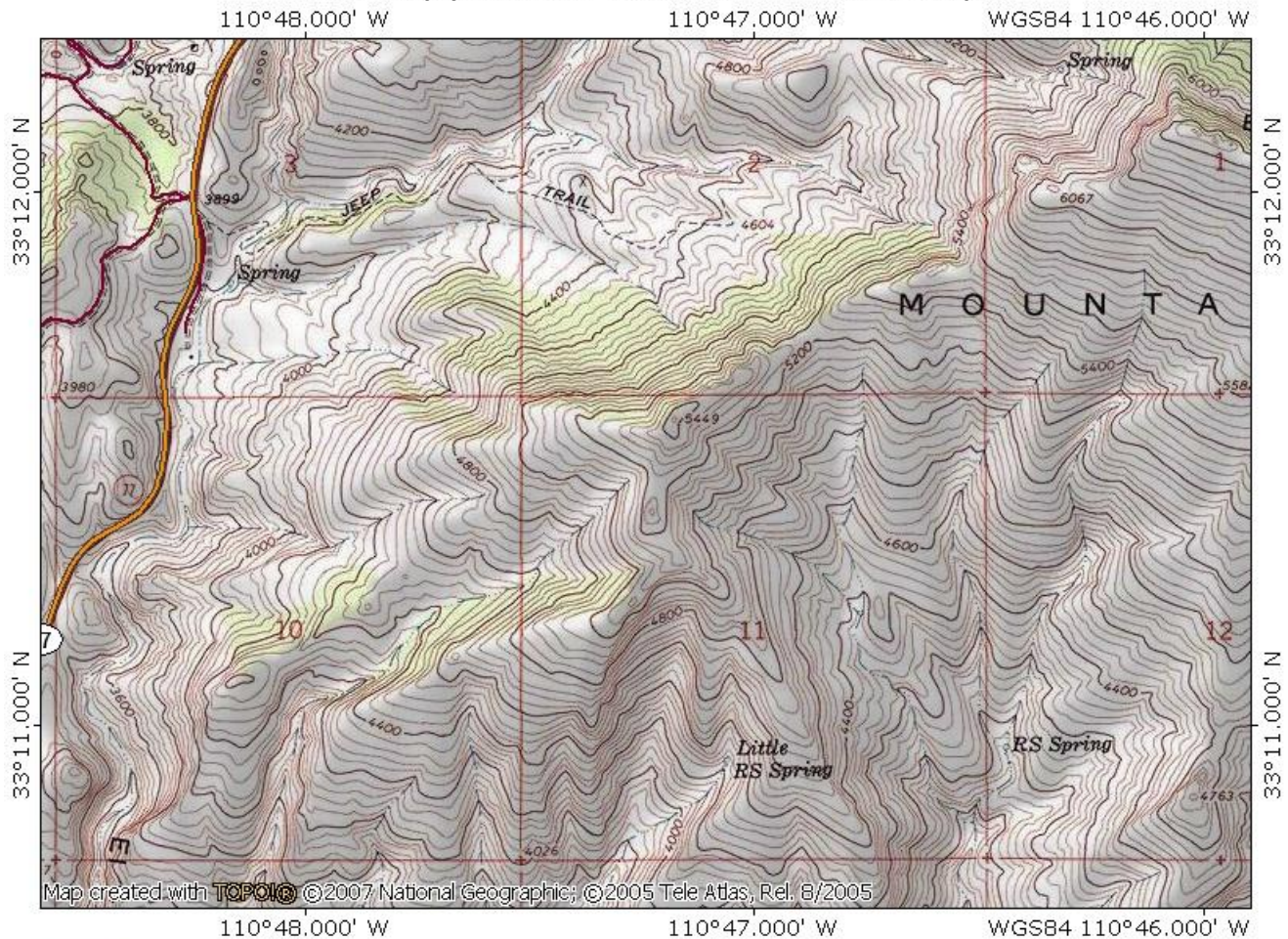
The capture operation is planned for the winter of 2014 using net guns operated from a helicopter, processed and released at their capture site.

PROJECT LOCATION:

PROJECT LOCATION	LANDOWNER AND/OR SITE NAME	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SEC.	UTM (meters) / GPS COORDINATES	
					(Northing / Lat.)	(Easting / Long.)
	Capture	T3S	R15E	1,2,3,10, 11		

PROJECT AREA

TOPO! map printed on 08/31/13 from "Untitled.tpo"



0.0 0.5 1.0 miles
0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 km

TN/MN
10 1/2°
08/31/13

LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

- Bureau of Land Management Agency, Tucson Field Office

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A COOPERATIVE BIG GAME STEWARDSHIP or LANDOWNER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?

YES[] NO[] N/A[x]

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Capture areas include Interior Chaparral, Semidesert Grassland and Sonoran desert.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

A minimum of one helicopter will be needed for a predicted two day survey and capture effort. Ferry time should be minimal due to the approved funding for the capture near Canyon Lake in Unit 22 for sheep being translocated to the Santa Catalina's in November 2014. Estimated ferry time of 4 hours at approximately \$700 per hour, totaling \$2,800. Cost for one helicopter performing the capture work should be approximately \$9,200 each day (8 hours/day at approximately \$1150/hr) for a total of \$18,400. Additionally, up to 5 Lotek Iridium GPS satellite collars will be placed on the released bighorn sheep, costing approximately \$4000 each for a total of \$20,000. Miscellaneous supplies for ear tags, medical supplies, laboratory testing for disease, etc should be approximately \$300.

Total project cost would be approximately \$ 41,500

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

This proposal's requested funds pending approval - \$41,500

Cost Share or Matching Funds (for volunteer labor rates please refer to the worksheet below)

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

BLM – land management agency coordination with AGFD to meet project objectives.
ADBSS - assist with funding and implementation.

WOULD IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT ASSIST IN PROVIDING, MAINTAINING, OR FACILITATING RECREATIONAL ACCESS?

YES[] NO[x] N/A[]

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

Project monitoring will consist of GPS data upload and monthly mapping evaluation to determine sheep movement trends and locations.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

N/A

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Danny Rodriguez, AZGFD

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS *(please use the worksheet below):*

N/A

TREE CLEARING/REMOVAL PROJECTS *(please use the worksheet below):*

N/A